



February 9, 2010

Good Morning Senator Handley, Representative Willis, and all members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee.

I am Patricia Bouffard, RN, D.N.Sc., Chair of the Connecticut Board of Examiners for Nursing and Dean of Academic Affairs at Northwestern Connecticut Community College. Thank you for allowing me to speak to you today in support of House Bill 5024, AN ACT CONCERNING AN EDUCATION DOCTORAL DEGREE PROGRAM IN NURSING EDUCATION.

Southern and Western Connecticut State Universities' proposal to create a new Doctorate in Nursing Education program for Connecticut is very exciting. As we are all aware, one of the most critical barriers in educating 'new' nurses is the unavailability of nursing educators. Recent data released by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing [AACN, December 2, 2009] indicates that approximately 39,423 qualified applicants to entry-level baccalaureate nursing programs were not accepted. As an educator, I am acutely aware of the need for appropriately prepared faculty for all levels of nursing education. The proposed Education Doctorate Degree [EdD.] prepares faculty for teaching, unlike the PhD and Doctor of Nursing Practice [DNP]. Faculty who understand curriculum design, educational theory, and the needs of adult learners will strengthen nursing education at all levels.

The enactment of this bill to ensure a public education doctoral program in nursing education will have a significant and positive effect on nursing education in Connecticut. Irrespective of the debate on entry level, the need for qualified faculty is critical. It is of paramount importance to prepare nurses at the master's and doctoral levels to provide quality nursing care and case management in an increasingly complex and demanding health care environment.

I applaud this collaborative initiative between Southern and Western in this austere budget climate. We all know that these types of partnerships serve both students and the citizens of Connecticut.